

What is claimed:

1. A system for cleaning the blanket cylinder of a printing press, the system comprising:

5 a brush having a plurality of bristles, the brush mounted to an axle and rotatable about a longitudinal axis and arranged to shift from a first position in which the bristles are spaced away from the blanket cylinder to a second position in which the bristles are positioned to contact the blanket cylinder;

the brush operatively coupled to a cam arranged to shift the axle back and forth along the longitudinal axis of the brush;

10 a flicker bar extending parallel to the brush and positioned to contact at least some of the bristles when the brush is in the second position; and

a conduit arranged for flow communication with a source of cleaning solution, the conduit positioned to direct cleaning fluid toward at least one of the brush and the blanket cylinder.

15 2. The system of claim 1, wherein the bristles comprise a polyester material having a diameter of twelve thousandths of an inch and an absorbency rate of 0.05 percent.

20 3. The system of claim 2, wherein an end of each of the bristles travels along a circumferential path at a circumferential speed in response to rotation of the brush about the longitudinal axis, and wherein the bristles are further sized and shaped to have a stiffness sufficient to permit an end of each bristle traveling along the path to be temporarily delayed upon contact with the flicker bar.

4. The system of claim 3, wherein the bristles are further disposed and spaced on the brush according to a bristle density, the bristle density arranged to be sufficiently low to permit the end of each bristle to swing forward along the path immediately after the end of each bristle leaves contact with the flicker bar.

5 5. The system of claim 4, wherein the bristle density is further arranged such that the end of each bristle swings forward along the path immediately after the end of each bristle leaves contact with the flicker bar without contacting any adjacent bristles.

6. The system of claim 4, wherein each of the bristles is adapted to pick
10 up debris upon contact with the blanket cylinder, and wherein the bristle density and the bristle stiffness are selected to permit the end of each bristle to swing forward along the path after leaving contact with the flicker bar a distance sufficient to dislodge at least a portion of the debris from the bristle.

7. The system of claim 1, the bristles arranged to travel along a path in
15 response to rotation of the brush and comprising a leading bristle and a trailing bristle, the leading bristle disposed in front of the trailing bristle relative to the path, and wherein an end of the trailing bristle swings along an arc upon contact with the flicker bar and upon leaving contact with the flicker bar upon rotation of the brush, the bristles spaced on the brush according to a bristle density, the bristle density chosen
20 such that the end of the trailing bristle swings though the arc without contacting the leading bristle.

8. The system of claim 7, wherein the bristles comprise a polyester material having a diameter of twelve thousandths of an inch and an absorbency rate of 0.05 percent.

9. The system of claim 1, the bristles arranged to travel along a path in response to rotation of the brush and arranged to collect debris upon contact with the blanket cylinder, the bristles comprising a leading bristle and a trailing bristle, the leading bristle disposed in front of the trailing bristle relative to the path, and wherein
 5 an end of the trailing bristle swings along an arc upon contact with the flicker bar and upon leaving contact with the flicker bar upon rotation of the brush, the bristles spaced on the brush according to a bristle density, the bristle density chosen such that the end of the trailing bristle swings through the arc a distance sufficient to dislodge the debris without interference with the leading bristle.

10 10. The system of claim 9, wherein the bristles comprise a polyester material having a diameter of between nine thousandths and sixteen thousandths of an inch, and wherein the material has an absorbency rate of about 0.05 percent.

11. The system of claim 10, wherein the diameter is about nine thousandths of an inch.

15 12. A blanket wash head for cleaning the blanket cylinder of a printing press, the blanket wash head mounted on a moveable carriage and including an oscillating brush and arranged to supply cleaning solution for cleaning the blanket cylinder, the blanket wash head comprising:

a plurality of bristles arranged on the brush, the bristles arranged to contact the
 20 blanket cylinder in response to movement of the carriage toward the blanket cylinder, the bristles sized to contact a flicker bar disposed within the blanket wash head;

the bristles arranged to travel along a path in response to rotation of the brush and arranged to collect debris upon contact with the blanket cylinder, the bristles comprising a leading bristle and a trailing bristle, the leading bristle disposed in front

of the trailing bristle relative to the path, and wherein, in response to rotation of the brush, an end of the trailing bristle swings along an arc upon contact with a flicker bar and upon leaving contact with the flicker bar; and

the bristles spaced on the brush according to a bristle density, the bristle
5 density chosen such that the end of the trailing bristle swings though the arc a distance sufficient to dislodge the debris without interference with the leading bristle.

13. The blanket wash head of claim 12, wherein the bristles comprise a polyester material having a diameter of between nine thousandths and sixteen thousandths of an inch, and wherein the material has an absorbency rate of about 0.05
10 percent.

14. The blanket wash head of claim 13, wherein the diameter is about nine thousandths of an inch.

15. The blanket was head of claim 14, wherein the bristles are arranged in a spiral pattern.

15 16. The blanket wash head of claim 14, wherein the bristles are arranged in rows.

17. A blanket wash head for cleaning the blanket cylinder of a printing press, the blanket wash head mounted on a moveable carriage and including an oscillating brush and arranged to supply cleaning solution for cleaning the blanket
20 cylinder, the blanket wash head comprising:

a plurality of bristles arranged on the brush, the bristles arranged to contact the blanket cylinder in response to movement of the carriage toward the blanket cylinder;

the bristles sized to contact a flicker bar disposed within the blanket wash head upon rotation of the brush;

the bristles arranged to travel along a path in response to rotation of the brush and arranged to collect debris upon contact with the blanket cylinder;

5 the bristles further comprising a leading bristle and a trailing bristle, the leading bristle disposed in front of the trailing bristle relative to the path, and wherein, in response to rotation of the brush, an end of the trailing bristle swings along an arc upon contact with a flicker bar and upon leaving contact with the flicker bar; and

10 the bristles are spaced on the brush according to a bristle density and a bristle stiffness, the bristle density and the bristle stiffness each chosen such that the bristles dislodge debris and moisture carried by the brush upon contact with the flicker bar.

18. The blanket wash head of claim 17, wherein the bristles comprise a polyester material having a diameter of between nine thousandths and sixteen thousandths of an inch, and wherein the material has an absorbency rate of about 0.05 percent.

19. The blanket wash head of claim 18, wherein the diameter is about nine thousandths of an inch.

20. The blanket wash head of claim 18, wherein the bristles are arranged in a spiral pattern.

20 21. The blanket wash head of claim 18, wherein the bristles are arranged in rows.

22. A rotatable brush for use with a blanket wash head and comprising:
a plurality of bristles;

the bristles having a length sized to contact a flicker bar disposed within the blanket wash head upon rotation of the brush, the bristles arranged to travel along a path in response to rotation of the brush and arranged to collect debris upon contact with the blanket cylinder;

5 the bristles arranged according to a bristle density, the bristle density being about 50% less than the bristle density of a conventional blanket wash head brush;

the bristles comprising a polyester material having an absorbency of about 0.05 percent; and

10 the bristles having a diameter relative to a length sufficient to cause an end of each bristle to dislodge debris in response to contact with the flicker bar.

23. The brush of claim 22, wherein the bristles comprise a leading bristle and a trailing bristle, the leading bristle disposed in front of the trailing bristle relative to a rotational path, and wherein, in response to rotation of the brush, an end of the trailing bristle swings along an arc upon contact with the flicker bar and upon leaving
15 contact with the flicker bar, and wherein the bristles density and the bristle stiffness are chosen such that the end of the trailing bristle swings though the arc a distance sufficient to dislodge the debris without interference from the leading bristle.

24. The brush of claim 22, wherein the bristles are arranged in a spiral pattern.

20 25. The brush of claim 22, wherein the bristles are arranged in rows.

26. The brush of claim 22, wherein the bristles are clumped in groups.

27. The brush of claim 22, wherein the diameter of the bristle relative to the length of a bristle may be expressed as a stiffness ratio, and wherein the diameter and length are sized to give a stiffness ratio of between about 81.7 and about 98.3.